T. Newman

THE

MASSACHUSETTS

Missionary Magazine,

FOR MAY, 1804.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE BRISTOL EDUCATION SOCIETY, FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE, 1801.

THE principal design of this Society, as far as it may please God to succeed the Institution, is to supply destitute Congregations with a succession of able and evangelical Ministers.

With this view, it is proposed to assist pious young men of promising abilities for the Ministry, in such a course of preparatory studies, as may enable them, with the divine blessing, to exercise their ministerial talents with the greater acceptance and usefulness.

To guard, as much as possible, against an unconverted Ministry, which whether learned or unlearned, is the bane of religion, the Society receive no students but such as are members of churches, and recommended as persons of promising abilities for the Ministry.

Nor does the society confine itself entirely to the business of education, but as far as its present finances admit of it, extends its patronage to evangelical and popular ministers as missionaries and itinerant preachers, in some of those many places where there is an opening for the gospel, but not an ability to support the necessary expense attending it, without considerable assistance.

An institution this, so manifestly adapted to answer the most valuable and important purposes, that it seems almost impossible for any, but the enemies of religion, and such as have imbibed unreasonable prejudices against learning not to approve of it, and heartily unite in countenancing and supporting it.

Hitherto it has been remarkably favoured with the ſmiles of Divine Providence. The Inſtitution was firſt ſet on foot in the year 1770, in aid of the Baptiſt Academy in Briſtol, which was founded by that moſt excellent man, Mr. Edward Terril, more than a century ago, on a ſmall ſcale, and which was conducted for many years with conſiderable ſucceſs, by the late learned and truly reverend and pious Mr. Foſkett. And in the ſhort period which has elapſed ſince the firſt conſtitution of this ſociety, it has been enabled to realize a capital in the public funds of three thouſand five hundred pounds, producing an annual income of one hundred and forty pounds; and a liberal ſubſcription of about two hundred pounds per annum, excluſive of the truly noble bequeſts of the late Rev. Dr. Gifford, and Dr. Llewelyn, which have been more particularly noticed in our former annual accounts, and by which, though dead, they ſtill live in the grateful remembrance of the ſurviving friends of religion and learning.

But notwithſtanding the preſent flouriſhing ſtate of this ſociety, and the uncommon patronage with which it has been favoured, it ſhould not be imagined it ſtands in no further need of encouragement. Several valuable and generous members have lately been removed by death; but we hope other friends to the cauſe of God, are riſing up in their ſtead, who will account it their honour to lend us their aſſiſtance, in our attempts to promote the kingdom of our Lord. They ſhall proſper, who love Zion; they ſhall be accounted the friends of God, who prefer his church to their chief joy. In the buſineſs of education, as well as in the very important article of encouraging the propagation of the goſpel, patronizing decayed churches, and planting new ones; there is ſtill ample and delightful ſcope for the employment of an income vaſtly ſuperior to any ſum this ſociety can entertain an idea of ever poſſeſſing.

Every ſubſcriber of one guinea to the capital, and one guinea annually, is conſidered as a member of this ſociety, has a voice in all its deliberations, and liberty to inſpect the accounts, which are audited by a committee appointed for that purpoſe, and at the annual meeting.

Annual meeting of the Bristol Education Society, Broadmead Meeting, August, 1801.

The Rev. Mr. *Cooper*, of *Trowbridge*, preached from Hebrews 13th chapter, 17th verſe, "They watch for your ſouls as they that muſt give account."

Adjourned to the veſtry.

PRESENT.—Rev. Dr. Ryland, Preſident, Rev. John Cooper, Rev. Job David, Rev. Thomas Symonds, Rev. Thomas Flint, W. A. Ballard, Eſq. J. Tomkins, Eſq. Mr. Sol. Leonard, Mr. James

James Rees, Mr. Thomas Ransford, Mr. E. Phillips, Mr. John Daniel, Mr. Joſeph Cottle, Mr. Tho's. Paſco, Mr. Tho's. Burchell, Mr. Jos. Dear.

Rev. Dr. Ryland, in the Chair.

The thanks of the ſociety were unanimouſly voted to the Rev. Mr. Cooper, for his excellent ſermon.

The Preſident reported—That ſix ſtudents were ſupported laſt year by the Education Society, viz. Meſſrs. *William Gray*, *W. Rowe*, *S. Saunders*, *Joſeph Tyſo*, *John Chamberlain*, and *Thomas Griffin*; who all return their thanks to the ſociety, and requeſt the continuance of their kind aſſiſtance in the farther proſecution of their ſtudies; except Mr. *Gray*, who having been long ſolicited to ſettle with the church at Bratton, is willing to comply with their requeſt if it meets the approbation of the ſociety. The Briſtol fund had only two ſtudents, during the firſt half year; viz. Mr. *John Douglas*, and Mr. *Joſeph Webb*. Their education being finiſhed at Whitſuntide, the latter is invited in probation by the church at Tiverton; the former is at preſent unſettled. Two other ſtudents were admitted on this foundation, at Chriſtmas; Mr. *Daniel White*, from the church at Bluntiſham, in Huntingdonſhire, under the paſtoral care of the Rev. Coxey Feary; and Mr. *Samuel Shaw*, from the church in Cannon-ſtreet, Birmingham. Meſſrs. White and Shaw return to the academy, and will be joined by Mr. *Richard Owers*, from Earl's Colne, in Eſſex, to whom the fundees have promiſed their patronage.

The Broadmead benefactions were granted to Meſſrs. *Jenkin Jones*, and *Matthew Griffiths*; Mr. Jones having been four years in the academy, is returned into Wales; Mr. Griffiths is gone to reſide with Mr. Littlewood, at Rochdale in Lancaſhire. Theſe benefactions cannot maintain any ſtudents this year; more having been taken upon them ſometime back, than they are found ſufficient to ſupport.

Mr. *Samuel Stennett* had an exhibition from the London Society; and Mr. *Micah Thomas*, from the church at Pen-y-garn, was admitted into the academy at Chriſtmas under the patronage of tha London fund.

The ſtudents of laſt year have very generally conducted themſelves in ſuch a manner as to afford much ſatisfaction to their tutors; by their diligence, and improvement in literature; and by the evidence of their piety and promiſing talents, which we truſt will render them acceptable to our churches, and uſeful in the cauſe of God.

JOHN RYLAND,
ISAAC JAMES.

Four guineas were allowed to Mr. *William Gray*, on his leaving the academy.

Reſolved, that Mr. *Daniel Davis*, be admitted into the Academy

my, of which the president will inform his father, but having no room for more students on the foundation of the society, Mr. *Isaac Isaac*, cannot yet be received.

Resolved, that Mr. *Sutcliff*, of Olney, be invited to preach the next annual sermon, and in case of failure Mr. *Birt*, of Plymouth Dock.

Resolved, to allow Dr. *Ryland* 40 guineas for extra expense in housekeeping.

The thanks of the society were voted to the secretary, and he was requested to continue in office the following year.

The next meeting of the society to be held on the first Wednesday in August, 1802.

The committee to be continued with the same powers as usual, and to be open to every subscriber.

COMMITTEE.

The Rev. Dr. Ryland,	Mr. John Mears,
—— Mr. Wilkins,	Mr. Edw. Phillips,
W. Sheppard, Esq.	Mr. Thomas Ransford,
John Page, Esq.	Mr. Joseph Cottle,
W. A. Ballard, Esq.	Mr. L. B. Larwill,
W. Tomkins, jr. Esq.	Mr. James Rees,
Dr. Cox,	Mr. John Protheroe,
Mr. Edw. Ransford,	Mr. E. Ransford, jun.
Mr. Tho's. Burchell,	Mr. Isaac James.
Mr. Solomon Leonard,	Mr. Edward Daniell,
Mr. John Daniell,	Mr. Joseph Dear, Sec.

An account of Receipts and Disbursements.

Dr.

	£.	s.	d.
To old subscriptions . £139 2 6			
New ditto 15 15 0			
Arrears 10 10 0			
	165	7	6
Donation from Mr. Fontleroy, Southwark	20	0	0
Ditto from Mr. Foster, Biggleswade .	10	0	0
One year's dividend on 3500l. 4 per cent. ann.	140	0	0
2 sets of Theodosia's Poems . . .	0	19	6
Balance of Dr. Ryland's account . .	0	6	11
Anonymous Donation per Dr. Ryland .	10	10	0
	£347	3	11

From

From June 1800, *to June* 1801.

Cr.

	£.	s.	d.
By balance of laſt year's account due the Treaſurer	26	6	4
Board of ſix ſtudents	126	0	0
Tuition of Ditto	37	16	0
Allowance to Ditto	25	4	0
Vacation for one ditto in 1800	4	4	0
Allowance to Dr. Ryland for extra expenſes in houſe-keeping,	42	0	0
Rent and taxes one year	31	10	0
Sundry repairs	7	1	6
Floor cloth for the Muſeum	6	5	0
Books, Printing, Binding, &c.	11	16	7
Allowed towards the funeral of Mr. Williams, late ſtudent at the Academy	4	4	0
12 ſtudents attending a philoſophical lecture	1	16	0
Inſurance to Sept. 29, 1801	3	6	0
By balance in the hands of the Treaſurer	19	14	6
	£347	3	11

Examined and approved by us,

John Ryland,
Iſaac James,
Solomon Leonard,
Thomas Ransford,
Edward Ransford, jun.
James Rees,
John Daniell,
Edward Daniell,
Joſeph Dear.

N. B. Seventy ſtudents have been received and educated by this ſociety.

A copy of the Table of Benefactions, in the Museum belonging to the Society.

		£.	s.	d.
1770	Frederick Bull, Eſq. London	150	0	0
	Thomas Sparry, Sen'r. Upton	100	0	0
	Rebekah Leppincott, Wellington	50	0	0
	Robert Houlton, Eſq. Grittleton	21	0	0
	Joſeph Tomkins, Eſq. Abingdon	25	5	0
	William Tomkins, Eſq. ditto	25	5	0
	Joſeph Butler, Eſq. ditto	41	0	0
	John Bull, Eſq. Briſtol	15	15	0
	Francis Bull, Eſq. ditto	10	10	0
	John Stock, ditto	10	10	0

Thomas

	Thomas Bunn, Frome		10	10 0
	William Steel, Esq. Broughton		10	10 0
	Baptist Church, Lymington		10	10 0
	Rev. Hugh Evans, M. A. } Tutors to			
	Rev. Caleb Evans, M. A. } the Insti-		31	10 0
	Rev. James Newton, M. A. } tution.			
1772	John Houlton, Esq. Seagry		10	10 0
	Rev. Thomas Dunscombe, Coate		10	10 0
1774	Ann Callwell, Chesham		50	0 0
	Susannah Callwell, ditto		100	0 0
	Thomas Llewelyn, Esq. L. L. D. London		60	0 0
	Stephen Williams, ditto		10	10 0
	Rev. Samuel Stennet, D. D. ditto		20	0 0
1775	Ebenezer Hollick, Esq. Witser		20	0 0
	Elizabeth Durban, Bristol		21	0 0
1777	Abraham Elton, Esq.		10	10 0
	John Crammont, Leicester, (a legacy)		10	0 0
1778	Rev. Isaac Woodman, Sutton, (a legacy)		40	0 0
1779	John Holmes, Esq. Exon		16	6 0
1780	Rev. Andrew Gifford, D. D. London		100	10 0
	John and Wm. Parsons, Esq. Chichester		10	0 0
1781	George Wilkinson, London		10	10 0
1782	William Deane, Plymouth, (alegacy)		150	0 0
	John Reynolds, Barbican		20	0 0
1783	Rev. Andrew Bennett, Barbadoes		10	0 0
1784	Diana Mount, Tiverton, (a legacy)		20	0 0
	James Hewardine, Arnsby, (a legacy)		10	0 0
	Hester Bull, Bristol		10	0 0
	Tho's. Llewelyn, Esq. L. L. D. London, (a legacy) consisting of his library, which cost more than		1500	0 0
	Rev. Andrew Gifford, D. D. London, (a legacy) consisting of his Library, Pictures, Coins, &c. estimated at		1000	0 0
	Frederick Bull, Esq. (a legacy)		1000	0 0
1785	John Thornton, Esq. Clapham		10	0 0
	John Anstie, Esq. Devizes		10	10 0
1787	John Davis, Calne, a reversionary legacy of		50	0 0
1789	John Cooke, Bristol, (a legacy)		50	0 0
1790	Rev. James Newton, M. A. ditto (a legacy)		50	0 0
1791	William Thomas, Hitchin, (a legacy)		50	0 0
	John Edmunds, Fairford, a reversionary legacy of £200. 3 per cent. Cons.—Stock		200	0 0
1792	Ann Moore, Bristol		20	0 0
	Rev. John Poynting, Worcester, (a legacy)		200	0 0
1793	Rev. Abraham Booth, London		5	0 0
1794	Mrs. Simkin, Blaby, Leicestershire		5	0 0

1795	Rev. Peter Reece, Warwick, (a legacy)	85	0	0
1797	Joseph Wyke, Leominster, (a legacy) -	20	0	0
	John Jarrett, of Bristol, (a legacy) -	20	0	0
	James Self, Esq. Trowbridge - -	10	10	0
1800	Thomas Fontleroy, London - -	20	0	0
	John Foster, Biggleswade - -	10	0	0
1801	Anonymous (by Dr. Ryland) -	10	10	0

For the MASSACHUSETTS MISSIONARY MAGAZINE.

THOUGHTS ON ESTHER iv. 16.

"And so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."

THE situation of Esther, at this time, was truly difficult and distressing. Through the influence of Haman, letters were sent by posts into all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day. This having obtained the royal seal, became a law of the Medes and Persians, which was unalterable. Esther, therefore, being a Jew, could not escape the general fate of her devoted people. Think not with thyself, said Mordecai in his message to her, that thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews. It only remained for Esther then to go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people. But all the king's servants and subjects knew that whosoever, whether man or woman, should come unto the king into the inner court, without being expressly called, there was one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king should hold out the golden sceptre, that he might live. Now Esther had not been called to come in unto the king for thirty days. If she went in then uncalled, death must be her immediate doom, unless it should please the king to extend his sceptre. Trying state indeed! Gloomy alternative! Look which way she would, death, inevitable death stared her in the face. If she continued where she was, quick and certain destruction awaited her: if she came into the king's presence she must also at once perish, according to a fixed law, except the king's pleasure should be otherwise. In this awful dilemma what shall Esther do? In one view, her condition must be considered as altogether hopeless;

leſs ; in another ſome glimpſe of hope might appear, for perhaps the king would ſee fit to reach forth the ſceptre, as a token of life and favour. Under a full conviction of all this, that if ſhe ſtood ſtill ſhe muſt periſh, and if ſhe came and unreſervedly gave herſelf up to the king's diſpoſal, ſhe could but periſh, Eſther reſolves—"*And ſo I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law ; and if I periſh, I periſh.*"

How ſtriking a picture is here exhibited of the condition and duty of all as ſinners ! By nature all are children of wrath. The ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die. He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him. Deſtruction and miſery are in their ways. Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh, upon every ſoul of man that doeth evil. He that believeth not ſhall be damned. Theſe are declarations of the word of truth. Sentence of eternal death is out againſt every impenitent unbeliever. This ſentence, although not always ſpeedily executed, is certain to be executed finally. To every ſuch character God is ſaying in his word, as Mordecai ſaid to Eſther, "Think not, O ſinner, that thou ſhalt eſcape : can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be ſtrong, in the days that I ſhall deal with thee ? I the Lord have ſpoken it, and will do it." All which can remain then is, that the ſinner go in unto the King, the Lord of Hoſts, to make ſupplication unto him. But how ſhall he obtain audience and acceptance ? The law which he has broken allows no appeal, it knows no mercy. Being a tranſgreſſor, it is not according to this law that he ſhould be permitted to come before his injured Sovereign, or indulged the privilege of calling on his holy name. If the ſinner ſhall venture before the Lord therefore, to offer up his requeſt, it can avail nothing ; notwithſtanding all his entreaties, he muſt ſtill periſh in his ſins, and juſtly too, unleſs it pleaſe the Majeſty of heaven, for his Son's ſake, to extend the ſceptre of mercy that he may live. In this dreadfully expoſed condition, under theſe trying circumſtances, what is to be done ! The awakened, trembling ſinner ſees certain and endleſs death before him, if he ſtay where he is, or remain in his preſent ſtate ; and ſhould he pray, he knows, he feels that he may righteouſly be rejected, and given over to deſerved deſtruction ; and that he muſt be thus rejected after all his prayers and tears, unleſs ſovereign mercy and grace ſhall appear in his favour. Thus he finds his caſe to be awfully hazardous and alarming in every view. On one ſide he ſees no hope ; on the other, ſome ray of hope is diſcovered in the midſt of gloomy fears, for who can tell but God may turn away his fierce anger, that he periſh not ? Under the moſt ſenſible and deep impreſſion of all this, that if he does not bow before God in hearty unreſerved ſubmiſſion and humble prayer, he muſt inevitably periſh, and that he can but periſh if he does thus ſubmit, he is brought to reſolve with Eſther—*And*

ſo

ſo will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law, that I have tranſgreſſed, and if I periſh, I periſh. He ſubmits, and prays, and God hears.

INFERENCE.

May it not be inferred from the foregoing thoughts that the doctrine of unconditional ſubmiſſion to the will of God is rational, experimental, and ſcriptural? Is it not rational to ſubmit to God, whoſe power is accompanied with juſtice, perfect and inflexible, with wiſdom complete and unerring, and with goodneſs infinite? Can a Sovereign of ſuch attributes permit his rightful dependent ſubjects to ſtate the conditions on which they will ſubmit to his holy pleaſure? Is this to be ſuppoſed reaſonable? How would it have appeared in Eſther, had ſhe, the moment ſhe came before the king, ſaid to him, I will ſubmit to your deciſion if you will ſave me and my people from the impending evil? When it depended entirely upon the king's pleaſure whether ſhe ſhould live or die? Eſther was more conſiſtent in her conduct than all this. Her language before ſhe approached the king was that of ſubmiſſion; and her manner of approaching him was the ſame: She could come into his preſence only in a ſilent ſubmiſſive poſture, waiting his ſovereign will to extend or withhold his ſceptre, and to receive life or death accordingly. How muſt it appear then in rebellious, ſelf-ruined, helpleſs creatures to approach their almighty Maker and Judge, ſaying in their hearts, we will ſubmit, we will yield ourſelves up to your hands, if you will pardon and ſave us? When at the ſame time they are in his hands as clay is in the hands of the potter, and he can at once make them veſſels of mercy or wrath as he ſees fit? Sober reaſon can readily determine in ſuch a caſe.

This duty of unreſerved ſubmiſſion to the divine will is evident likewiſe from the experience of ſaints. The doctrine is experimental. Aſk the ſaints if they found God a reconciled God and Father to them, till they became reconciled to his holy character and government; till they were willing that God ſhould be God, as well in the affair of ſaving or deſtroying them, as in all things elſe. Do we not know their anſwer? Will they not readily ſay, that they were conſtrained to throw down the weapons of their rebellion, and ſubmit themſelves without the leaſt reſerve to the will of their offended Sovereign, before they found in their ſouls a ſenſe of his pardoning mercy and love?

To the law and to the teſtimony. "Submit yourſelves, therefore, to God. Be ye reconciled to God. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Hold your peace, let me alone, and let come on me what will. Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, ſays the prophet, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him, until he plead my cauſe.

Let all realize that periſh they muſt, and that eternally, if they ſtay away from God in their ſtate of oppoſition; and that it is their duty, and will be their wiſdom at once to come and bow themſelves before him in humble entire ſubmiſſion: it may be that God will reach forth to them his merciful ſceptre, enable them to touch the top of it and live forever.

JUSTUS.

DIALOGUES ON THE NATURE AND TENDENCY OF THE HALFWAY COVENANT.

Between FIDELIS, CANDIDUS, and HUMANUS.

DIALOGUE II.

Fid. WELL, brethren, I am glad my apprehenſion was groundleſs. I feared our firſt converſation took ſuch a turn, that a ſecond would not be deſired.

Can. Indeed, Sir, the peculiar ſpirit of that converſation was a ſpecial reaſon why I wiſhed for another. If this interview be as friendly and inſtructive as that was, I hope to be more thoroughly releaſed from the ſhackles of prejudice, and to ſee in a ſtill clearer light the path of my duty.

Hum. As for you, Candidus, I am reſolved that your ſoft and pliable temper ſhall have no effect on me. You need not expect that I ſhall eaſily renounce the ſentiments and practices, in which I have been educated; eſpecially when they may be ſo well defended, as the halfway covenant. This has been the ſubject of my reflections ever ſince our converſation. I have thought of ſcarcely any thing elſe. It has occaſioned me ſuch labour and perplexity of mind, that I have ſometimes regretted the circumſtance, which made it an object of attention. I believe, nevertheleſs, the final conſequence will be deſirable. For I find, the more cloſely I attend to the ſubject, the more favourably I am led to think of the common practice.

Can. What ſeems to me deſirable is, that we find and embrace the truth, whether it conſiſt with the common practice or not.

Fid. Let us be acquainted, Humanus, with the fruit of your intenſe ſtudy. Your ingenuity may, for aught I know, have diſcovered many errors in our former converſation, and may now bring forward unanſwerable arguments for the halfway practice.

Hum. I believe, Sir, the practice reſts on ſolid ground. It is capable, I think, of being ſupported by the beſt arguments.

But

But I muſt beg your patience, gentlemen, for the methods of proof are various. If one method fail, I ſhall reſort to another. The fate of war does not always depend on a ſingle encounter.

Fid. Proceed in your own way. Only remember we are not met for the purpoſe of war, but of friendſhip and mutual improvement. Freely utter every thing in your mind, which may expoſe any fallacy in my reaſoning, or help us to find the way, in which we ſhould walk.

Hum. All your remarks in our former converſation proceeded on this ground, *that perſons are admitted to the halfway practice upon the ſuppoſition, that they are not the ſubjects of holineſs.* This one thing, incautiouſly conceded, put great advantage into your hands, at the ſame time diſarming us, and leaving the iſſue of the controverſy at your diſpoſal. I now retract that conceſſion, and wiſh the practice to be placed on another foundation. I find that ſome miniſters admit perſons to the halfway covenant, *upon the ſuppoſition that they are truly penitent.* Of one who would enter into that covenant they require ſatisfactory evidence of religion. They conſider the covenant as complete, and the covenanter as entitled to all the privileges of memberſhip. But they are willing to make allowance for his conſcientious ſcruples with reſpect to himſelf, and his miſconceptions with reſpect to the Lord's ſupper. Though they are ready to receive him to communion, and wiſh him to come, they would not deprive him and his children of all the privileges of the church, becauſe he cannot come.

Fid. You now reſt the practice upon a foundation, which ſeems to me the moſt favourable. According to this, the halfway covenant is admitted for the ſake of accommodating humble, doubting believers, and ſo has an appearance of chriſtian forbearance and tenderneſs. But I wiſh it may be kept in mind, that this is not the ground of the common practice; and that requiring proper evidence of grace in thoſe who are to be admitted, would involve a great alteration in the ſtate of our churches.

Hum. Though what has been ſtated is not preciſely the common practice, I wiſh it may be cloſely examined. For now I think the truth begins to dawn.

Fid. Let us, then, carefully examine the ſubject, as you now lay it before us. According to your preſent ſcheme, perſons admitted to the covenant are in fact as really qualified for the Lord's ſupper, as for the covenant.

Hum. True. But they think otherwiſe. Though they can with ſatisfaction come to the halfway covenant, and offer up their children in baptiſm; they cannot believe themſelves in any meaſure fit for the Lord's ſupper.

Fid.

Fid. You conſider ſuch perſons under a miſtake?

Hum. Yes. Their making ſuch a diſtinction between chriſtian ordinances, and ſuppoſing themſelves qualified for ſome and not for others, muſt indeed be accounted a miſtake.

Fid. Now, I apprehend, the origin of this miſtake will, in many inſtances, be found in the practice of our churches.

Hum. How does this appear?

Fid. It is the language of the prevailing practice, that there is an eſſential diſtinction between covenanting with God and partaking the Lord's ſupper, and alſo between the requiſite qualifications for each. The practice publicly holds up a diſtinction between duties which are equally ſolemn and binding. Now it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that ſuch a practice impreſſes its own miſtake upon the minds of men. How eaſy it is for perſons of a pliable, docile temper to fall in with a ſentiment, which is authorized by the churches of Chriſt? How natural to rely on thoſe, who are conſtituted the ground and pillar of the truth, and ſo to look upon themſelves entitled to a covenant ſtanding, though not to full communion? Could ſerious people ſo frequently imbibe this miſtake, without the influence of prevailing practice?

Can. If my information has been correct, miſtakes like this were made before the practice was introduced.

Fid. I allow it, Candidus. And I venture to add, that upon thoſe miſtakes the practice was founded. It was to accommodate perſons, who were accounted ſincere believers, but whoſe preparation for full communion was doubted, that the halfway covenant was invented.

Can. It ſeems, then, we have generally departed from the views, with which our forefathers introduced the halfway practice.

Fid. Undoubtedly we have. It was publicly known at the time, that the ſynod of 1662 "did acknowledge that there ought to be true ſaving faith in the parent according to the judgment of rational charity, or elſe the child ought not to be baptized." Dr. Increaſe Mather, a divine of principal note in favour of the practice, undertakes profeſſedly to ſhow, that parents, in order to enjoy baptiſm for themſelves and their children, ſhould have not only hiſtorical, but juſtifying faith. But he held, "that more full and ſatisfactory evidence of regeneration and of chriſtian proficiency is requiſite in order to admiſſion to the Lord's table, than in order to baptiſm." The ſynod inſiſted upon *initial grace* in order to baptiſm; but ſuppoſed greater attainments neceſſary in order to full communion. Accordingly, no man can allege the authority of our forefathers for the common practice of *receiving perſons into covenant and baptizing their children without any evidence of their piety.* The authority of our forefathers, in order to be of any avail, muſt be urged preciſely in favour of that ſcheme, which

which they meant to eſtabliſh. And that, I ſuppoſe, Humanus, is nearly the ſcheme, which you have now undertaken to defend.

Hum. It is. And I am glad you have preſented it before us in ſuch a pleaſing connection. The authority of men ſo learned, and ſo eminently pious, as thoſe who introduced the practice, muſt be of great weight in our minds.

Fid. I hope, Humanus, you will not forget the caution we have heard from your own lips, "that we ought not to ſubmit to the authority of human names, however celebrated." The caution may, I think, be applied with more propriety now, than it could be, when you adminiſtered it. You adduce the mere authority of celebrated names. Whereas all that I did was to mention a great divine, who believed and ably defended the ſentiments which I had been attempting to prove, and to refer you to the arguments found in his writings. Now there is a great difference between blindly relying upon great names, repeating continually, "our forefathers, our pious forefathers," as the ground of our belief, and a proper regard to the reaſons, by which diſtinguiſhed authors have ſupported their ſentiments.

Hum. But can you, Sir, with ſafety, and with becoming deference to the fathers of our New England churches, ſay, that the practice which they introduced was founded on a miſtake?

Fid. Yes, Humanus. Nor am I alone. You have ſubſtantially ſaid the ſame. For perſons to think themſelves, or for others to think them qualified for one ordinance and not for the other, you allowed to be a miſtake. Now the perſons, whoſe advantage was conſulted by the halfway practice, were, in the eye of charity, ſincere penitents, who, nevertheleſs, judged themſelves and were judged by others unqualified for the Lord's table. It is our united opinion, that ſuch a judgment was erroneous. And it was in conformity to ſuch an erroneous judgment, that the halfway covenant was introduced.

Hum. If that miſtake were the occaſion of introducing the practice, how can the practice be conſidered, as you have ſuppoſed, the origin of the miſtake?

Fid. It was ſaid to be its origin "in many inſtances." This miſtaken judgment reſpecting the Lord's ſupper had an influence with thoſe, who firſt authorized the halfway covenant. When that mode of covenanting came into common uſe in the churches, it tended, in its turn, to promote the very miſtake, by which itſelf was occaſioned. There are many caſes beſides this, in which two things have a reciprocal influence.

I will now endeavour, Humanus, to bring my obſervations to a point. Ought we to do any thing, which naturally and directly tends to promote error?

Hum. Certainly not.

Fid. Does not the halfway covenant, ſtanding on the foundation

tion you have now chosen, promote error? Even admitting that it does not originate the mistake of scrupulous christians, who think they ought not to come into full communion; does it not evidently confirm and perpetuate that mistake? Now why do we give countenance and support to a hurtful, acknowledged error by public religious transactions? We both believe persons under a mistake, who make an essential distinction between covenanting and the Lord's supper, and suppose themselves qualified for the one and not for the other. Shall we confirm them in their mistake by practically subscribing to it? The mistake is not trifling and harmless. Its direct influence is, to keep from full communion those lowly, tender souls, whom the churches earnestly wish to receive, for whom the helps of gospel ordinances are specially designed, and who would, in all probability, be ornaments to christianity. Many humble believers, no doubt, have stopped in the halfway practice, who, had it not been for that snare, would have been in the bosom of the church. If, brethren, we wish to remove this mistake of humble, pious men; is it the proper way practically to fall in with it? If we would convince men, that there is and can be only *one* covenant of grace; is it the most promising way, to have the form and public appearance of *two*?

Hum. But as the mistake is such as sincere believers may fall into, and therefore is not essential; why need we set ourselves so strenuously against it? Rather than exclude such characters from all privileges, why is it not a proper exercise of christian forbearance and kindness, to admit them as far as they judge consistent, and overlook an omission, which springs from weakness, and not from impiety?

Fid. I think, Humanus, there is a more excellent way. By giving suitable information and counsel to such persons, we might generally remove their mistake. But whether that be done or not, we take too much upon us, if we excuse men for neglecting the duties, which the Lord enjoins. To feel compassionately towards those who imbibe this unhappy mistake, is the duty of every christian. But we cannot consistently pay such deference to their mistaken judgments, as to dispense with the laws of God. "This do in remembrance of me," comes from the same authority, as the command to believe in Christ. We may as properly exempt a man from the obligation of believing in Christ, as from the obligation of commemorating his death. What right have we, merely to accommodate those who neglect the Lord's supper, to make a new standing in the church, which our great Lawgiver never appointed, and which the word of God no where contemplates?

Hum. Does not the apostle inculcate the duty of receiving them, who are weak in the faith? Does he not caution us against holding them in contempt, or doing any thing to offend their consciences?

conſciences? "Let not him that eateth deſpiſe him that eateth not." Again, "Who art thou that judgeſt another man's ſervant?"

Fid. I wiſh you to obſerve attentively, that in the paſſages now cited, the apoſtle is diſcourſing of thoſe things only, which are indifferent, ſuch as eating meats offered to idols, and regarding various appointments of days according to Jewiſh cuſtom. With reſpect to moral, or poſitively appointed duties, there is no ſuch allowance enjoined or permitted. The proper expreſſion of love and tenderneſs towards the ſcrupulous, erring chriſtians now intended is, to bear them on our hearts to the mercy ſeat; to impart needed inſtruction; and to preſs the importance of walking blameleſsly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, as the only way to ſecure the aids and comforts of his Spirit. To ſuffer their errors to paſs unnoticed, and countenance them in the omiſſion of duty is implicitly the greateſt unkindneſs. When we are inquiring whether we have a right to excuſe any chriſtians from the Lord's ſupper, I wiſh theſe remarks, if they ſeem worthy of conſideration, may not be wholly forgotten.

Hum. May not ſome aſſiſtance in vindicating the halfway practice be had from the venerable Stoddard's plan?

Fid. Not the leaſt. "Mr. Stoddard," to uſe the words of a great divine, "never practiſed the halfway; that is, he never admitted any to have baptiſm for their children, but thoſe who were in full communion. And he expreſsly declares that thoſe, who have been baptized in infancy and owned their covenant, are obliged in duty to come to the Lord's table. Yea, he ſays, *it is a ſcandal if they do not; and the church may call them to an account for their neglect.* So that there was no room for the halfway practice on his ſcheme."

Hum. I gave notice at the beginning, that the methods of proof would be various. The failure of one method does not hinder the ſucceſs of another. I now lay aſide all arguments of human invention, and appeal to the oracles of God. Let the halfway practice be placed on ſolid ſcripture ground, and there, I think, it will ſtand firm.

Fid. If it will ſtand there, let it ſtand forever; and let all attempts to ſubvert it be utterly confounded.

Hum. The great ſcripture argument, which I could urge, is the conduct of Moſes and Joſhua in adminiſtering God's covenant to all the people of Iſrael, and circumciſion to all their children. What they did appears ſimilar to the common practice of our churches, and may therefore be uſed as an argument in its favour.

Fid. I would know, Humanus, with what particular views you urge this argument. Are we to regard the covenant, which

which was adminiſtered to the children of Iſrael, as implying the covenant of grace ?

Hum. For the preſent I grant we are.

Fid. Thoſe then, who profeſſedly entered into that covenant, profeſſedly complied with the conditions of eternal life ?

Hum. Yes.

Fid. And thoſe, who ſincerely and cordially entered into that covenant, were the ſubjects of ſaving religion ?

Hum. No doubt.

Fid. What will you ſay of thoſe Iſraelites, who covenanted with God by outward profeſſion, but not cordially ? Were they not chargeable with hypocriſy ?

Hum. It cannot be denied.

Fid. Is that ſin worthy of imitation ? Is it the duty of any one to do that, which is in fact hypocriſy ? May we knowingly encourage any one to do it ? May we ſupport a practice, which does actually countenance hypocriſy ? Becauſe the rebellious children of Iſrael "flattered God with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues;" is it lawful for men to do ſo at this day ?

Hum. But do conſider, Sir, that God and his ſervants required the children of Iſrael to do the very thing, which you now charge againſt them as downright wickedneſs.

Fid. I am fully convinced, that your poſition cannot be ſupported. It plainly appears, that God required the people to covenant with him uprightly and with all the heart. So that when they covenanted by viſible profeſſion, but were deſtitute of truth in the inward man, they did not what God required.

Hum. This muſt have ſtrong proof, before I can admit it.

Fid. A due conſideration of Jehovah's character would go far towards ſettling this point. Accuſtomed, as we are, to judge according to outward appearance, we are apt to forget that God ſearcheth the heart. Can the heartſearching God be pleaſed with that ſervice, which comes not from the heart ? Can the Holy One of Iſrael be pleaſed with that ſervice, which is deſtitute of holineſs ? And can he *require* any ſervice, with which he is not pleaſed ? The ſcripture contains evidence which is directly to the purpoſe. From Deut. v. and from many ſimilar paſſages, it appears beyond diſpute, that the whole moral law was comprehended in the Sinai covenant. Conformity to the moral law was what God primarily required, and what the people explicitly promiſed in that covenant. But we recur to particular places. Exod. xxiv. "And Moſes took the *book of the covenant*, and read in the audience of the people. And they ſaid, *all* that the Lord hath ſaid will we do, and be obedient." What God required, and what they promiſed, was *univerſal obedience*. Read alſo in Deut. xxvi. "This day the Lord thy God hath commanded

commanded thee to do theſe ſtatutes and judgments. Thou ſhalt therefore keep and do them *with all thine heart and with all thy ſoul.* Thou haſt avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, to keep his ſtatutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice." Such were the demands of God's covenant, and ſuch the engagements of thoſe who entered into it. God required of them nothing more nor leſs, than that they would comply with the terms of this covenant *with all their heart and with all their ſoul.* When, therefore, they ſaid, " we avouch the Lord to be our God, and we will do all that he hath commanded," and yet were deſtitute of holy conformity to God and his law; they did not enter into covenant according to the divine injunction. God required that to be done *in ſpirit and in truth,* which they did by viſible profeſſion only. Their doing it viſibly, but not with the heart, was inexcuſable hypocriſy.

Hum. When did God charge them in this manner? He evidently accepted their covenant tranſaction, and in conſequence of it dealt with them as his own peculiar people.

Fid. It is God's way, in the preſent world, to treat men according to their viſible conduct, and not to expoſe them, before they expoſe themſelves. Thus he treated Judas and other falſe profeſſors in the days of Chriſt and the apoſtles. Thus he treated the children of Iſrael. By profeſſion they were the ſervants of God, the children of his covenant. He treated them as ſuch, until their conduct diſplayed their real character.

Hum. I grant they were reproved for the *violation* of the covenant which they made with God. But where are they charged with criminality, merely for entering into covenant as they did?

Fid. Scripture abundantly teaches that God is diſpleaſed, when we enter into his covenant without uprightneſs of heart. Beſides ſuch general expreſſions as theſe, " without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God," " they that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God;" there is evidence, that God is peculiarly diſpleaſed with ungodly men, who take his covenant upon them, or engage in any religious tranſaction. He declared to the Jews, Iſa. 1. that their ſacrifices, their treading his courts, their ſabbaths, their ſolemn aſſembly, their many prayers were all iniquity and abomination in his ſight; that he had not required ſuch ſervices at their hands; that he loathed them, was weary to bear them, and would hide his eyes from them in utter abhorrence. And in Pſa. 50, he ſingles out the particular practice now before us, and ſets upon it a mark of ſtrong diſapprobation. "Unto the wicked God ſaith," I tremble when I repeat his words, " what haſt thou to do to declare my ſtatutes, or *that thou ſhouldſt take my covenant in thy mouth?*"

Hum. Had the Lord been diſpleaſed with the children of

Iſrael for entering into covenant without holineſs of heart, would he not have made known his diſpleaſure by certain ſigns? ſo that generations to come might not be expoſed to error.

Fid. The difficulty is acknowledged. The ſolution, which ſatisfies me, is this. The criminality of the people was not viſible. Their profeſſion was good. "They have well ſaid all that they have ſpoken," was God's teſtimony on the ground of their viſible profeſſion. *God makes known his diſpleaſure no ſaſter, than his creatures are capable of underſtanding the reaſons of it. And they are capable of this no ſaſter, than characters are made known by viſible actions.* It is not eaſy to ſee how, upon a different plan, the righteouſneſs of God could be manifeſted and glorified among rational creatures.

Hum. How is it conſiſtent for God to bear the teſtimony you have juſt mentioned, and others like it, in favour of thoſe, who had nothing and did nothing really pleaſing in his ſight?

Fid. Quite as conſiſtent, as for the Meſſiah to ſpeak to Judas, to embrace him, and to employ him year after year, juſt as though he had been a cordial friend, although Jeſus knew him from the beginning. Yea, it might as well be aſked, *why does not God judge the ſecrets of men, in the preſent life?* The important work of "bringing to light the hidden things of darkneſs," and judging men according to their deeds, is reſerved for the day of the Lord.

Hum. If all you have ſaid be allowed, what concluſion would you make?

Fid. I wiſh you to make the concluſion yourſelf. Is it agreed between us, that the children of Iſrael, who entered into covenant with God without any conformity of heart to the terms of the covenant, were in that very thing highly criminal in his ſight?

Hum. Suppoſe it be admitted.

Fid. What argument, then, can you derive from their hypocritical profeſſion to vindicate the ſame kind of profeſſion at this day? Does their taking the covenant upon them with the rebellious hearts which they then had and which they ſoon after manifeſted, prove that men at the preſent day do their duty, when they take the covenant upon them with the ſame rebellious hearts?

Hum. It cannot be pretended.

Fid. This then is a concluſion, in which we unite; that the covenant tranſactions, which took place at Sinai and in the plains of Moab, afford no vindication of men, who enter into covenant without ſaving religion, and no reaſon why we ſhould encourage any to enter into covenant, who do not exhibit hopeful evidence of a gracious heart.

Hum. If there be no defect in the reaſoning, from which this concluſion

conclusion results, it must be valid. But what if it should be asserted, that entering into covenant does not imply so much, as we have supposed; that it is a mere acknowledgment of the obligations of the covenant, and not a profession of true godliness; and of course that the unrenewed may do it without hypocrisy?

Fid. Let this matter be well understood. We do not expect that men, in covenanting with God, will positively affirm *that they are godly*. But we do expect them to profess and exhibit those things, in which real godliness consists. That covenanting with God implies a profession of those things in which godliness consists, appears, I think, from these two considerations. 1. The terms, in which the transaction is generally expressed, plainly imply a profession of godliness. In entering into covenant, men avouch the Lord to be their God, receive Christ as he is offered in the gospel, and promise unfeigned obedience to all his commands. If a profession of godliness can be made in human language, it is made in such terms as these. 2. The blessings promised to those, who comply with the conditions expressed in the covenant, are the blessings of eternal life. This could not be, were not true godliness required by the conditions of the covenant. Other considerations are omitted.

Before we leave the covenant transactions of the Israelites, I beg liberty to make one or two appropriate remarks. Giving all possible weight to their example, we can deduce from it no argument favourable to the halfway practice. The difference between what they did and what is common with us is material and very plain. The covenant which Moses and Joshua administered was *complete*. That which the people took upon them was *complete*. They bound themselves by solemn engagement to hearken to the voice of God and keep all his commandments and ordinances. No exception was made or suffered by the administrator. None was asked or expected by those who covenanted. So that Moses and Joshua were nowise accessary to their hypocrisy and disobedience. But the halfway practice is different. Those who covenant mean to have it understood, that they leave out the Lord's supper. The churches do understand it, and have made provision for such an exception. And the exception is either expressly or implicitly made by the administrator.

Hum. Were not those who covenanted excused, in certain cases, from celebrating the passover?

Fid. Yes; even prohibited. And the disqualifications for the passover were fully defined. To be absent from the passover on account of ceremonial uncleanness was an indispensable duty. Now show me, Humanus, where the Head of the church makes a distinction among the duties of the new covenant. Show me where he points out the particular things, which disqualify his disciples for the ordinance of the supper; and his word shall be

our

our rule. Tell me, brother Humanus, where is the appearance of any ſuch practice in the apoſtles' days? Where is the leaſt evidence that two ſuch ſtandings, as are now made, were ever appointed by God? What ſhadow of proof, that any who profeſſed to believe, and enjoyed church privileges, were excuſed from partaking the Lord's ſupper?

Hum. Really, ſir, the difficulties are great on both ſides. I want more time to examine. I ſtill ſuſpect there is ſome weak place in the argumentation, which has brought my mind into this doubtful ſtate. I ſhall wait with earneſt deſire for one more interview.

Can. I have liſtened with ſilent, prayerful attention to what has been ſaid. I think myſelf happy in this interview. My perplexity is abated. My mind is more at eaſe. Whatever remains to be ſettled in this controverſy, I am reſolved in this—"to do thy will, oh my God."

From an Engliſh Correſpondent.

A WORD TO THE PROFANE.

N. B. If the former part does not ſuit you, give it to a neighbour.

Don't be Damn'd.

DAMNATION is infinitely dreadful! If you do *not* believe there is any ſuch thing, how fooliſh is it to talk ſo often about it; and if you *do*, how much more than fooliſh is it, to talk ſo lightly about it!

Could you really wiſh your worſt enemy to be damned for ever? Would you ſeriouſly aſk God to ſend him to hell, and pour out his wrath upon him, to all eternity? Would it not ſtartle you, to ſee the earth open and ſwallow up the man, whom you had curſed? Would it not ſhock you, to ſee his eyes ſtart out of his head, or rot away in their ſockets? Would it gratify you to ſee his limbs wither, as ſoon as you had curſed them? or to find, that when he had ſtretched out his arm, it was dried up, like the arm of Jeroboam, ſo that he could not pull it in again to him? How then can you uſe ſuch awful imprecations? And yet you uſe them ſometimes reſpecting your friends, as well your bitter enemies; yea, ſometimes, (what madneſs!) with reference to yourſelf!

You

You have often ſaid, *I will be damn'd if*, &c. If what? Is there any one thing for which it is worth while to be damned? Would it be worth being damned, *if* you could get all the world, and enjoy it for a hundred, or a thouſand years? Do you think that a hundred years ſenſual pleaſure, would compenſate for five minutes ſuffering in hell? What then will the pleaſures of ſin do, to counterbalance eternal damnation?

However, you *will* be damned moſt aſſuredly, if you do not forſake ſin, and turn to God with your whole heart; or if you do not repent, and believe the goſpel, fleeing for refuge to lay hold upon that bleſſed hope which is ſet before you.

You *will* be actually damned ere long, if you are not *pardoned*; for you have ſinned abundantly againſt God, and are condemned already, by the ſentence of his holy law. "Curſed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." How many times over have you merited this curſe? How will you then eſcape it? God is merciful, but he is alſo juſt. He will not clear the guilty. He is angry with the wicked every day. Without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion. But God hath provided for himſelf a Lamb. He hath ſent his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and made him a ſacrifice for ſin, condemning ſin in his fleſh, and ſhewing at once the goodneſs and the ſeverity of God. Thus Chriſt gave himſelf a ranſom for many, and made reconciliation for tranſgreſſors. His blood cleanſeth from all ſin. God has ſet him forth as a propitiation for ſin, through faith in his blood. But there is ſalvation in no other; and without faith in him, you cannot obtain the pardon of one ſin. You muſt thankfully receive God's teſtimony concerning his Son, and return home to God in his name, imploring forgiveneſs for his ſake. Thus ſhall you be juſtified from all things, from which you could not be juſtified by the law; for Chriſt is the end of the law unto righteouſneſs.

You will be damned, if you have not a *title to eternal life*. For ſuch is the alternative before you. You cannot expect a long continuance in this world; and when you depart hence, if you have no manſion prepared for you in heaven, you muſt needs be turned into hell. There is no other place to receive you. But what title have you to eternal bleſſedneſs? or how can you expect to inherit a crown of glory? This is an important queſtion, to which an anſwer can be furniſhed only by the glorious goſpel. Though the wages of ſin is death, yet the gift of God is eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. And thus you may inherit it. Believe in Chriſt and you ſhall not only be ſaved, but ſhall be made an heir of eternal life. His obedience unto death ſhall ſuffice to entitle you to endleſs happineſs.

You muſt be damned, if you are not *made meet* for the inherit-

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ance of the ſaints in light. An unholy heart cannot reliſh the enjoyments of ſaints. One who loves darkneſs rather than light, could not bear the brightneſs of heavenly glory. One who is diſaffected towards God, cannot be made happy by reſiding in his immediate preſence. Heaven would be a place of torment to an unrenewed ſinner. He would be totally out of his element there. No marvel that he who came from heaven ſhould ſay, Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God. You muſt be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind; you muſt be created anew in Chriſt Jeſus, or you never can have a portion with the people of God.

But do not be damned! *It will be your own fault if you are.* It will not only be in conſequence of your paſt ſins, which have indeed deſerved damnation; but it will be more immediately owing to your preſent impenitence and unbelief: it will be becauſe you hold faſt deceit and refuſe to return to the Lord. It will be becauſe you reject the counſel of God againſt yourſelf, and make light of his great ſalvation. It will be becauſe you ſcorn the humbling import of the goſpel, and are not willing to ſtoop to be ſaved by grace; or you ſlight the mediation of the Son of God, and will not believe the efficacy of his blood to cleanſe from all ſin: or you hate the holy tendency of the goſpel, and are unwilling that Chriſt ſhould reign over you, and ſubdue all your iniquities; and you mind only earthly things, and deſpiſe that bleſſed inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Thus in the end, (which will quickly come) you will be found to have been a fool!

Nothing can give ſolid peace to your conſcience, but the precious blood of Chriſt; nothing can conquer the perverſeneſs of your ſtubborn will, but the powerful influence of the divine Spirit: therefore, if you are ſaved, your ſalvation muſt be all of grace, but if you are loſt, your blood will be on your own head.

May God incline your heart to liſten to this friendly warning, or that which was intended for your benefit will aggravate your condemnation!

From an Engliſh Correſpondent.

REMARKS UPON THE NOTION OF EXTRAORDINARY IMPULSES AND IMPRESSIONS, &c.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

SINCE I ſaw you laſt, I have frequently thought of you with much concern, and ſincerely wiſh you divine

vine ſupport, under all your trials, and direction in all your embarraſſing concerns. As I make no doubt of your being a partaker of divine grace, I believe the Lord will, in the iſſue, bring you ſafely through all your troubles. Yet, if I may ſpeak my mind freely, I am jealous over you, leſt you ſhould increaſe your own diſtreſſes and leſſen the benefit you might receive from them, by ſome miſtakes into which you ſeem in danger of falling.

You remember the account you gave me of *your receiving many promiſes from God*, particularly reſpecting your *temporal circumſtances*; and that you expreſſed the ſtrongeſt *confidence* of their *literal* and punctual fulfilment. Perhaps you will think me your enemy, ſhould I endeavour to rob you of any part of the conſolation you have derived from this ſource. However, bear with me till you have heard me out; and I truſt it will appear, that I do not wiſh to uſurp dominion over your faith, but to be a helper of your joy.

I rejoice that you are enabled to abound in *prayer*, and thereby to make your requeſt known unto God, being deſirous to caſt all your care upon him, and to derive inſtruction and ſupport from his word. I am fully aſſured, that the word of God will be found a ſufficient directory, in all caſes whatever; and a ſource of ſpiritual comfort, under the greateſt trials.

It is your duty and privilege to *ſearch* the ſcriptures daily, both for direction and conſolation; and to endeavour, when you cannot have the Bible in your hand, to *recollect* the precepts and promiſes, and meditate upon them; praying that the Holy Spirit would not only aſſiſt your natural power of recollection, but more eſpecially that he would give you a *ſpiritual underſtanding* of his word, and an *anſwerable frame of heart*, properly affected with the various truths therein contained.

You have reaſon to bleſs God for the ſuitable proviſion he has made in his word, which, I gladly allow, is as exactly ſuited to your caſe, as if the words had been ſpoken to you individually; though, bleſſed be God, the ſame word of truth is equally ſuited to all other believers; and you have no more cauſe to complain of *this*, than you have to complain, that while the ſun warms and enlightens *you*, as much as if you lived alone on the earth, it affords the ſame benefits to millions more at the ſame time.

You ought to be thankful that God has given you a *memory*, and aſſiſts you, from time to time, to recollect ſuitable paſſages of ſcripture, which ſometimes occur to your mind, in a very apt and ſeaſonable manner. But, perhaps, this obſervation will rather diſpleaſe you; and you will hardly allow that you do *recollect* them, but think they are *immediately ſuggeſted* to you from God. However, if your memory is like mine, it will be very difficult to prove this point. I have, many a time, had good things and bad ſuddenly occur to my mind, which at firſt I thought I

had

had never read or heard before, and yet have afterwards found out where I first met with them. And, be this as it may, it is a matter of *no consequence* at all, whether God assists my natural faculties in recollecting his word, or immediately suggests it. The bare suggestion of words to the mind would not necessarily be accompanied with the exercise of grace; for Balaam, and other natural men, have had wonderful things told them by God himself, and yet had no grace at all in their hearts. And, on the other hand, if my memory, or twenty other natural faculties of body or soul, were made use of, in bringing the word of God to my mind, yet if I had at the same time the real exercise of grace, I might be assured that *that* was owing wholly to the spirit of God.

I therefore wish you, and all christians, to ground your consolation not on the MANNER in which the promises are brought to the mind, but on the MATTER contained in the promises themselves. It is unsafe for persons to think themselves christians, because they have had promises brought *suddenly* to their minds, as if *a voice* spoke them, when they did *not know* there were any such words in the book. The suddenness proves nothing, either one way or the other; the voice is probably formed by the strength of their own imagination; and if it really came from heaven, would be no surer than the written word was before; and as to their not knowing the words were in the book, that is the worst sign of all; for it only proves they have not read their bibles so much as they ought to have done. Whereas, suppose you were to take any one plain promise of the gospel, and read it over ten times a day, for twelve months together; if upon the last day of the year, after reading it 3650 times, you found your mind enlightened to discern its real, original meaning, were persuaded of its certain truth, and made to embrace it as good, sincerely and earnestly desiring the enjoyment of the blessings therein contained, for the same ends for which they were promised; and depending on the faithfulness of the promiser for the fulfilment of his gracious engagement; thus being excited to give up your heart to him; if you had felt no emotion of the kind for 3649 times that you had read the words before, and if at last your comfort came in ever so slowly, you might nevertheless be safely assured that it came from God.

But at this time I meant chiefly to speak of the promises of *temporal blessings* of which you seemed to be so confident, that God had made them to you in particular, and would accordingly undoubtedly fulfil them. Now it is a certain and comfortable truth, that "Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." 1. Tim. iv. 8. But verily, my dear friend, *I have no notion that God has made one promise of temporal blessings to you, but what*

what is common to all believers in similar circumstances. Herein you seem to me to be in great danger of mistakes, and such as will probably lead you into other considerable errors, if they are not rectified. Christian friendship, therefore, induces me to use freedom and plainness on this head.

Before the canon of scripture was closed, God made known his will at sundry times, and in divers manners, to many of his servants, by way of immediate revelation. He made various particular events known before hand to Abraham, and Joseph, and David, and others; and gave them promises which belonged to them exclusively; and could not be safely applied to any other. For instance, he promised to Abraham, that his seed should be as the sand of the sea for multitude; and that all nations of the earth should be blessed in his seed, &c. He engaged that Joseph should be exalted above his brethren, and all his father's house. He foretold, that David should be himself seated on the throne of Israel; and afterwards swore unto him, that of the fruit of his loins he would raise up the Messiah to sit upon his throne. God also made new revelations to bad men, as well as to the godly; to Pharaoh, to Balaam, to Jeroboam, to Jehu, to Ahaz, and Nebuchadnezzar, &c.

But *we* who have now the whole Bible to direct and support us, are not encouraged to expect or desire *new* revelations; but it is our duty to make use of the *perfect* revelation which God has already made, and put into our hands: and I must insist upon it, that it is so full and perfect, that you cannot need any addition to it.

The *precepts* of the Bible are so plain and full, that if we have but a single eye to the divine glory, they will in all cases be found a *sufficient directory*, as to every branch of duty. Indeed, had I ever so much grace and spiritual understanding, the Bible would *not* tell me what will come to pass next year, nor even what will take place tomorrow. It will not tell me whether I shall be rich or poor in futurity; whether I shall continue in my present circumstances, or alter my outward condition within any limited period: it will not inform me whether I shall live long, or die soon; nor will it assist me to predict a thousand events which my curiosity would like to know. But it will do that which is ten thousand times better; it will direct me to be concerned, that whether I live, I may live to the Lord; or if I die, that I may die in the Lord; it will teach me to acknowledge God in all my ways, and encourage me to cast all my care upon him; it will tell me that my times are in his hands, and excite me to bless the Lord at all times. It will not absolutely inform me of *what* God will do, as to any of my outward concerns; but it will assure me that if I am a christian indeed, he will deal well with me; he will surely do me good: and it will teach me, that

as I know not what is good for me, of all that is before me, I ought, in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content. Surely it is *much better* for me to know what I ought to do to-day, than to know what will come to paſs to-morrow. I had much rather know the *duties* of one hour, and have a heart to do them, than have a revelation of all the future events of my life. Now I am thoroughly convinced of this important truth, which I dare confidently aſſert and maintain, viz. *That common ſenſe, a Bible, and a right ſpirit, will always inform a chriſtian what is preſent duty.* They will not always direct him to *action*, becauſe his preſent duty may be *patient waiting*. They will not inform him, how he may certainly avoid a variety of troubles, (though they will probably aſſiſt him to eſcape many difficulties, with which he would otherwiſe meet) but they will teach him how to glorify God, by bearing all unavoidable troubles in a becoming manner.

Thus alſo the ſupports and conſolations of the Bible will be found quite ſufficient for every chriſtian in the foreſt troubles. Place me in the worſt ſituation that ever a child of God was in, and let God only enable me truly to underſtand and fully to realize, what he has already ſaid, in his *good old revelation*, and I ſhould have ſupport and comfort enough; I ſhould need no new revelation to make me eaſy. By the OLD revelation, I mean the ſcriptures in their original ſenſe and meaning, underſtood as ſaying *nothing more to me than what they ſay to all chriſtians in the like circumſtances;* ſo that *every other chriſtian would learn juſt the ſame things from them which I do, if he had but an equal meaſure of ſpiritual light.*—By a NEW revelation, I intend all ſorts of *impreſſions* concerning ſuppoſed facts, not already diſcovered in ſcripture; or concerning future events, not already foretold: whether theſe impreſſions are made in the words of ſcripture; or by any other words, ſtrongly fixed on the mind. If detached ſentences of ſcripture are made uſe of, that makes the caſe none the better, unleſs the ſenſe gathered from them was originally contained in the Bible.

Perhaps you will ſtand me out, that you have known ſome ſuch inſtances of this ſort of impreſſions being fulfilled, that I can never perſuade you they are always deluſive. As to myſelf, I only ſay, that I have no better opinion of *theſe* tales, than I have of tales concerning *ghoſts* and apparitions. I ſhould not care to affirm, that no man, in any one inſtance whatſoever, really ſaw an apparition; but I believe that out of a hundred ſuch tales, half of them are barefaced lies, and probably forty-nine of the other half were merely the effect of a ſtrong imagination; and if one in a hundred ſhould be true, I do not wiſh to experience the truth of either kind of wonders myſelf: nor have I any more deſire to receive a true new *revelation*, than I have to receive a viſit from a real *ghoſt*.

However,

However, I must be more positive in maintaining, that, supposing them both to be real, there is no more token of *grace* in the one case than in the other. Indeed it is possible that a new revelation, if it were really made to a good man, might be *attended* with the exercise of grace; and so might his seeing an apparition. But it is certainly a *far better* evidence of grace, for a man to bear up under trials, by means of scriptural consolation, while he is uncertain of future events, than for him to be supported and comforted by the certain foreknowledge of some agreeable change in his outward circumstances.

Suppose you were in a state of poverty, and, being greatly distressed on that account, were to be relieved by an express revelation, that some distant relation would soon die, and leave you a large fortune; I think verily you would not have the opportunity of exercising such grace, and giving God such glory, as another person, who, though as poor and afflicted as yourself, should yet be composed and resigned to the will of God, notwithstanding he had no expectation of any remarkable alteration of circumstances in his favour; but who should rely on the providence of God, to supply him with absolute necessaries, submitting to his wisdom and sovereignty, and rejoicing that he had chosen the poor of this world, to be rich in faith, and heirs of his kingdom.

I wish you, my dear friend, to pray earnestly for more spiritual understanding of the good old revelation already made; be content that the Bible has said already, to all believers, enough to support them in the worst distresses, and do not indulge a wish to make it say more than it has said. There is much instruction and consolation treasured up therein, with which we have as yet but a very imperfect acquaintance; let us study that; leaving secret things to the Lord, and being thankful that he has given us such an ample revelation of his holy will.

It is more flattering to *spiritual pride* to hold an immediate dialogue with the Almighty, and to foretel our own future prosperity, and I know not what besides, than to study the plain word of God, and learn no more from it than what all our christian brethren might learn by the same means: and indeed this tendency of such sort of impressions is one great objection to them. But the other method is much more honourable to God, and to his written word, more favourable to the exercise of grace, and, in the issue, more comfortable and safe for ourselves. At best, I may be mistaken as to these new revelations, but the old can never prove false. If I were unmarried, and desirous of changing my circumstances in life, a revelation of my certain success in courtship might disappoint me; but an assurance that God would perform the thing that he had appointed for me, could not. If I were in poverty, a promise of riches might fail, but a promise that God will add all that is really needful, to them who seek first the kingdom

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of God and his righteouſneſs, cannot deceive me. If I were under trials, an impreſſion that they ſhould have an end at a given period, might fail; but a promiſe that they ſhall iſſue, ſome way or other, to the glory of God, and to my real welfare, cannot fail, for God has inſured this to all them that love him, who have been called according to his purpoſe.

Since I was firſt acquainted with religion, I have known many inſtances of the ſad conſequences of giving heed to *impulſes*, both in thoſe that I believe were truly gracious, and in others whom I could not but ſuſpect to be deſtitute of divine grace. I have ſeen repeated inſtances of perſons carried away by theſe *impreſſions*, who have appeared, for a long time, exceedingly confident of the fulfilment of theſe imaginary promiſes, reſpecting certain events which they deſired; but yet inſtead of calmly waiting God's time for their accompliſhment, they have been ſubject to the *moſt violent and diſorderly ſallies of paſſion*, upon any appearance of a diſappointment; even while they have profeſſed to retain their confidence that God had indeed ſaid ſuch and ſuch things to them: a ſad indication to me, that their faith in that particular, was not the gift of God. And when real Chriſtians, as I verily believe, have for a while been drawn into ſuch ſnares, how have they been tempted to throw away all their experience, good and bad together, when events have taken place quite contrary to their expectation! I wiſh to uſe all poſſible tenderneſs in attempting to rectify miſtakes of this kind, but I have ſometimes had cauſe to repent not ſpeaking my mind more plainly and fully.

I pray, therefore, my friend, that you may be contented with inquiring into preſent duty, and ſatisfied with the ſtores of conſolation already treaſured up in the divine word, as the common ſtock of the people of God. Perhaps you are ready to reply: Well, but then the Bible will not aſſure me to the contrary, but that I may be as poor as Job, or as Lazarus. Very true; it will not ſecure you from any one affliction to which other believers are liable; but however as it aſſures you the Lord will never fail you, nor forſake you; that he will cauſe all things to work together for your good; that though for the preſent, if need be, you may be in heavineſs, through manifold temptations; yet the trial of your faith, being more precious than that of gold which periſheth, though it be tried with fire, will be found to glory, and honour, and praiſe, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt; you will, in the iſſue, find cauſe to ſay this is enough: God has ſpoken in his holineſs, and I will rejoice, ſince he in all things ſhall be glorified.

Hoping you will take all my freedom in good part, I ſubſcribe myſelf *yours, &c.*

AGNOSTOS.

P. S. The writer of the preceding letter, who has now reviſed it, would refer the reader, that may wiſh more thoroughly

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to inveſtigate the ſubject, to Preſident EDWARDS's Treatiſe on the *Affections*; p. 77, 78 *and* 119—126, *&c.* 188, *&c.* Edinburgh Edition, 1772. And to another work too little known, written by the ſame Author, entitled *Thoughts on the Revival of Religion*, in New England, 1742. p. 133—140. All which part is omitted by Mr. *Weſley* in his abridgment, publiſhed in 1745, which is in other inſtances *greatly mutilated*: as particularly in the omiſſion of the illuſtration of the nature of the work in a particular inſtance, p. 35—44. which account is very extraordinary: there is room to conclude the perſon was Mrs. Sarah Edwards, the author's wife.

COPY OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY MRS. GILL, IN HER LAST ILLNESS.

February 23, 1771.

MY DEAR SIR,

ACCEPT the laſt token of my eſteem for your perſonal worth, of my gratitude for the condeſcending notices of your affection, and of my thanks for thoſe labours and ſervices you have performed for the cauſe of our holy religion.

Through the kind hands of my worthy friend, Mr. Haiſleys, I tranſmit you my dear father's manuſcripts, on Acts xiii. 40, 41, and Phil. iii. 2, 21. leaving them entirely to your faithful care; humbly begging, as they had not the retouches of his accurate hand, that you will very critically reviſe and uſher them into the world by a preface.

From my dying pillow, I now, in all probability, take leave of my much valued correſpondent. To my bed have I been confined near twelve painful weeks, and am brought to the duſt of death! Phyſicians and friends have done their beſt; but God has withheld his bleſſing! He is great, he is holy, he is wiſe in all he does by me! And if through the infinite riches of his free grace (that grace which was the ſpring head of man's redemption) the infinite value of a dying Saviour's atonement and purchaſe, my horrid, guilty, wretched ſoul be pardoned, juſtified and cleanſed; then, my dear, my reſpectable Sir, we ſhall, I truſt, meet before the throne of God and the Lamb, there commence an acquaintance free from all alloy, or ſinful imperfection. But, O the bliſs of bliſs will be to be admitted to a view of infinite perfection, as it will forever appear through the perſon of the

the adorable Jeſus. To have our whole minds conformed to his likeneſs, and to be uſed by the bleſſed God as mediums through which his glory ſhall ſhine to eternal ages! Methinks I long for that period, when we ſhall join the general anthem of all the heavenly choir, in low, but exalting proſtration, and aſcribe bleſſing, and honour, and glory, might and dominion, and all our perſonal and collective bleſſedneſs to God and to the Lamb, forever and ever! Amen and amen.

I am expecting a call into the inviſible world, that unknown region! The proſpect is grand, awful and all important! and ſometimes I am all amazement. I have no hope in any thing, but the value of the Redeemer's blood, and the free mercy of a God, who is juſt, even when he juſtifies the vileſt of ſinners on the ſole account of that propitiation!

O Sir, let a glorious Chriſt in his whole character, in all his mediatorial glories, be more and more the ſubject of your preaching. And may you win many ſouls to him.

Farewell, dear Sir, fare you well in time and in eternity. I beg leave to commend the religion of Chriſt to all your children. May they be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus.

Your dying friend,

SARAH GILL.

To the Rev. Dr. Erſkine.

LETTERS ON SOLITARY DEVOTION.

[*Continued from page* 459, *vol.* I.]

FROM *PASCAL* TO *JULIA.*

LETTER XII.

NEXT to the true knowledge of God, and ourſelves, my dear Julia, is it important to a life of devotion that we keep in remembrance, that it is only through the name, and merit of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt that all our petitions are to be preſented before the throne of grace. "Through him," ſays the apoſtle, "we both, that is, believing Jews and Gentiles, all true chriſtians, have acceſs by one ſpirit unto the Father." As ſinners, we are caſt out into the open field, wallowing in our blood. We are in arms againſt our lawful Sovereign. The heavens are incenſed againſt us, and the elements wait to deſtroy us. An inſuperable partition wall ſeparates between God and us, interrupting all acceſs to his favourable preſence. The flaming ſword of the law keeps us at a diſtance. And the herald, who precedes

precedes the approaching judge, pronounces nothing, but *wo, wo, wo.* The Socinians tell us of the efficacy of repentance, and its certain acceptability, for its own ſake, before the divine tribunal. But this they learn, not out of the ſcriptures, but from the crude digeſt, of their own impious philoſophy. There is no evidence that there would have been a penitent feeling in any human boſom, had it not been for the atonement of Chriſt.

We ſeem to be aſſured of the oppoſite, for we are expreſsly told, that "He is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to grant repentance unto Iſrael and remiſſion of ſins." Repentance then is itſelf a fruit of the Redeemer's work. But ſuppoſe it were not, and yet exiſted in the ſinner's heart, it would be only that holy temper in an imperfect degree, which the law requires; and could make no reparation for the injury done to God, and the intelligent univerſe, by ſin. However humiliating or threatening it may be, it were wiſer to admit the truth as the ſcripture teaches it. In the Bible we learn that Chriſt is the way, the truth, and the life; that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby they can be ſaved; that the prayers of the faithful are all to be offered in his name; and that they are acceptable only through his merits. Says this bleſſed Redeemer, "and whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in *my name*, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Again, "hitherto have ye aſked nothing in *my name*, aſk and ye ſhall receive, that your joy may be full, at that day ye ſhall aſk in *my name*; and I ſay unto you, that I will pray the Father for you." And ſays Paul, "And whatſoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the *name of the Lord Jeſus*, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him." Nothing is more congenial to the feelings of the chriſtian, than this doctrine; and this ſole way of acceſs to the mercy ſeat! But what is it to pray in the name of Chriſt? It muſt be for his ſake, with excluſive reliance upon him, counting upon his merit only, and reſting our hope of acceptance in him; juſt as if, knowing myſelf to have been a rebel in a civil government, and juſtly under ſentence of death, I ſhould bring my petition to the king for pardon, intirely in the name, and for the ſake of a beloved ſon; who had eſpouſed my cauſe, took me into particular union to himſelf, whom his father delighted to honour, and for whoſe ſake he declared himſelf ready to pardon every ſuch humble petitioner, in whoſe behalf his ſon might be inclined to interpoſe. Let us then, my dear friend, in all our prayers keep this important conſideration in our view. Let us preſent all our petitions before the mercy ſeat as united to Chriſt, for his ſake, and through his name. Then, vile and polluted as we are in ourſelves, we may have confidence, and know that we are accepted in the beloved.

I am with perpetual regard for your felicity,

Yours, &c.

For the MASSACHUSETTS MISSIONARY MAGAZINE.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

AT page 110 of the Magazine an anecdote of a negro ſervant terminates with a query, which the writer of this, hoped to have ſeen anſwered by ſome one of your ingenious correſpondents, but has been diſappointed. To this diſappointment is owing his attempt to anſwer the query. The ſubſtance of the anecdote is as follows :

A reſpectable gentleman, with the remains of his family conſiſting of two young ſons, and Peter, a negro ſervant, having embarked at the Eaſt-Indies for London, they anchored, after having performed the greater part of the paſſage, at no great diſtance from the ſhip Commodore, which they diſcovered at anchor ; on board of which the gentleman had certain affairs to tranſact. Accordingly he entered a boat to go to the Commodore, at the ſame time charging his ſervant, Peter, to be faithfully attentive to his ſons.

Soon after his departure, a violent ſtorm aroſe, which reduced the ſhip to the moſt imminent danger of going to the bottom. In this extremity, the captain gave command to let down the boat, and the ſhipmen immediately committed themſelves to her protection. Peter, and the two lads were ſtill in the ſinking ſhip ; nor was the boat capable of receiving them all. Either Peter or the lads muſt ſtay behind and periſh with the ſhip. Peter was called upon to decide on the intereſting queſtion, who immediately decided in favour of the lads, and with promptitude and calmneſs committed them to the boat, and for his laſt words, ſaid, "*Telly my maſter, Peter done his duty.*" This is the anecdote. The query is *whether the conduct of Peter be juſtifiable ? If it be, on what principles ?*

This queſtion, it is conceived, admits of a conditional anſwer only. The conduct of Peter might *not* have been juſtifiable ; and yet it *might* have been juſtifiable. Exiſting circumſtances muſt determine the queſtion. What was the character of the lads under conſideration ? Were they young villians ? Had they juſt been making arrangements for carrying into execution ſome infernal deed of darkneſs, ſuch for example, as the maſſacre of the Commodore's crew ? Was Peter apprized of their deſign, and perſuaded that if their lives were continued, they would carry it into effect ? If ſuch were the exiſting circumſtances, Peter's conduct in ſacrificing his own life to preſerve theirs cannot be juſtified. He did not do his duty.

Were the lads under conſideration waſting away by an incurable diſeaſe, which was likely ſoon to terminate their temporal exiſtence ? Was this evident to the mind of Peter ? Or were they

they in any other ſituation of body, or in any ſtate of mind which would, in all reaſonable probability, render them entirely, or in a great meaſure, uſeleſs to their fellow-men, and a burden to themſelves? And was this apparent to the view of Peter? If ſuch were the exiſting circumſtances, Peter's conduct in ſaving their lives at the expenſe of his own, cannot be juſtified. He did not do his duty. Nor did Peter do his duty in giving up his own life for the ſake of ſaving the lives of his maſter's ſons, in caſe he had ſatisfactory evidence that the preſervation of his own life would be productive of more good to ſociety, than the preſervation of theirs. Nor, in fine, can Peter's conduct be juſtified, if he were influenced by no better motive than the love of popular fame, or by a hope of tranſmitting his name to the admiration of poſterity.

But if the lads in queſtion were poſſeſſed of amiable endowments of mind and of heart; if they were poſſeſſed of talents calculated to render them eminently uſeful in ſociety; if there were a reaſonable proſpect, ſhould their lives be ſaved, that they would employ their talents to uſeful purpoſes; or, admitting that each of theſe lads were equal to Peter in point of worth and excellency of character, or even admitting that their *united* worth and excellency, was ſuperior to the worth and excellency of Peter, and therefore, that in their united capacity they would be likely, if their lives were ſaved, to be more uſeful in the world than Peter. If ſuch were the exiſting circumſtances, and in view of them, Peter was led to prefer their lives to his own life; in this caſe, it is believed that his conduct was not merely juſtifiable, but in a high degree heroic, magnanimous, and diſintereſted; and therefore deſerving of a high degree of praiſe.

And now, reader, as Peter, according to the latter ſuppoſitions, performed an act of duty, in freely ſacrificing his own life for the ſake of preſerving the lives of two of his fellow-creatures, what wouldſt thou have done, hadſt thou been in his ſituation? Would'ſt thou have acted a like part? What thinkeſt thou?

NORVILLE.

Norfolk, March, 1804.

A LETTER FROM A PERSON IN GENESSEE COUNTRY, TO HIS BROTHER IN CONNECTICUT.

Bloomfield, April, 1799.

DEAR BROTHER,

I HAVE felt a great freedom for ſeveral weeks to write you a letter. You muſt not expect ſuch a communication as heretofore; but what I ſhall now advance, will,

I hope, and pray, call up your attention to things of infinite importance, both to your and my everlaſting welfare. And here, I call you for an evidence againſt me and my conduct for three or four of the laſt years I lived in Goſhen. You are a witneſs of my ſpite and enmity againſt the Calviniſtic doctrines, and of my endeavours to overthrow them, which doctrines, I *now* firmly believe to be founded on the bible, and to be the eternal truth of the only living and true God! This is the faith which I feel myſelf bound to ſupport by my teſtimony, and for which I am to contend the more earneſtly, becauſe for ten years paſt I have uſed every art, with the aſſiſtance of the *prince of darkneſs*, to deſtroy it. There is a large number of Preſbyterian and Baptiſt chriſtians about here. There have been many hopefully converted this winter. Theſe appear to be united in their purſuit, and to have but one mind, even the ſame, in a degree, that was in *Chriſt*. They appear to be humble, each eſteeming others better than themſelves. By thus loving one another as *God*, for *Chriſt's* ſake, has loved them, and in honour preferring one another with all humility and meekneſs and true wiſdom. They give evidence that they have paſſed from death unto life, and are the diſciples of *Chriſt*. *For this is the meſſage which ye have heard from the beginning, that we ſhould love one another.* Againſt theſe images of Chriſt was my ſpirit exaſperated to the higheſt pitch. I will now tell you what fed and ſupported it theſe three years; and by what power and means it was all taken away. About three years ago the Methodiſts came and ſet up preaching about three miles diſtant. I went to hear them, as did many others. But they all fell away, four or five excepted, and theſe do not profeſs to have ſaving grace. However, I continued with them till the middle of this winter. I ever contended, that they were right, and all others were wrong, particularly the Congregationaliſts. I was aſked by a Baptiſt, who uſed to call upon me frequently, what I thought of the Methodiſts? I told him I had underſtood the plan they went upon for a number of years, ſo that they had not given me one new idea about it, and that I had not one doubt, yea, was certain that they were entirely right. I had no thought that I could go to a place of happineſs unleſs my heart was changed; but I ſuppoſed God was obliged to change it, by his promiſe, if I did the beſt I could. On this account, I have been quarreling with God theſe ten years, becauſe he was not as good as his word, as I ſuppoſed. In the fore part of the winter, we had two congregational preachers alternately among us, and I attended with a view to confute them. They were powerful preachers, and my enmity was exaſperated in proportion. But a ſermon preached by one of them, from theſe words: "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal; but mighty through God," &c. had a wonderful effect upon me.

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The ſermon was preached with great meekneſs and tenderneſs, juſt audible enough to be heard by the people in two rooms, and about two hundred in number; but every word ſeemed directed to me. Here I was completely ſtripped of every thing I had fortified myſelf with before, and felt myſelf expoſed to the juſtice of God every moment. I went home curſing my heart for deceiving me ſo, and for ſuppoſing I had done ſomething to recommend me to God. It was *now* that God began to let me ſee a little of my own heart. I was exaſperated againſt *thoſe* preachers in a particular manner; and ſeveral others alſo who came moſt in my way, to a very alarming degree. So that ſome were afraid of me for fear I ſhould kill them. For about twenty-four hours, or nearer two days and one night, I was exceedingly diſtreſſed with ſpite and enmity againſt the preſbyterian chriſtians; and in a very particular manner againſt my wife, who had been a chriſtian about five years. I uſed my utmoſt endeavour to ſhake it off, by reaſoning the caſe with myſelf; frequently wiſhing that I might die, to know the worſt of my caſe. I finally determined to turn my wife out of doors, and put out my children or turn them upon the world, and make as great a ſlaughter and deſtruction with every thing I had, as I could; and then go into the wilderneſs where never man had been, if I could find ſuch a place, and there die and go to hell! If I could have had the ſame power that Saul had, and the law on my ſide as he had; which many times I wiſhed was the caſe, I ſhould have gone as far as he did. I was fanning grain in my barn between day-light and dark, when I made this laſt and deſperate reſolution. When in the ſpace of a few minutes, I felt the burden remove, which occaſioned a joy and trembling of heart, that ſhook my whole body, and the tears, which the hard hand of adverſity had ſcarcely at any time ſtarted, *now* flowed ſpontaneouſly down into the fan; while I wrung my hands and prayed to the Lord, to know what he would have me to do; and that he would forgive my ſins, which now appeared to be infinitely great and odious, and to be rolling away from me. My mind was now turned to my wife whom I had injured greatly, and uſed moſt barbarouſly on account of her religion. She now appeared a different object. I left the barn, and how I got out I am inſenſible; but remember walking very quick to the houſe and ſeeming not to bear half my weight on the ground, and when I opened the door, ſhe was the firſt object that met my eye, and a lovelier one I never ſaw. I wanted to fall at her feet and beg her pardon for perſecuting her religion, and every body elſe I had injured. But I was prevented making any immediate acknowledgments to my wife, on account of extraordinary company then at my houſe. She perceived a great alteration in me, and knew not what to make of it; but ſays ſhe never ſaw any perſon look ſo humble.

I felt

I felt ſo, but did not intend ſhe ſhould know how I felt till I could get her alone, where I could pour out my ſoul into her boſom. This ſoon happened, when ſhe aſked what the matter was, as ſhe perceived a very great alteration? I told her to be of good cheer, for I never ſhould perſecute her any more for religion, nor any body elſe; for I had got a new heart and mind, and ſuch an one as could not be from any thing ſhort of Almighty power, and the free unmerited grace of God; and thus I have continued till this time, a monument of the infinite, unmerited, pardoning mercy of God, and a witneſs that it is wholly of him for Chriſt's ſake.

REMARKS.

[This remarkable inſtance, diſplaying the power and riches of divine grace, exhibits a ſtriking practical comment on this humbling doctrine, clearly taught us in the ſcriptures: viz. that there is nothing ſpiritually good in a man until he is renewed by the Holy Ghoſt. So far from *this*, it teaches us that the whole heart is oppoſed to God, until the bleſſed moment, when he is pleaſed to ſoften it by the power of his grace. It teaches us, that ſo long as man remains in his natural ſtate, or is under the dominion of that carnal mind which is enmity againſt God, (for without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him) that he can do nothing to bring God under the leaſt obligation to beſtow converting grace upon him; but that he lies entirely at the diſpoſal of *ſovereign mercy*. How awfully was the enmity of this man excited? Its higheſt pitch was the very time it pleaſed God, by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, to melt his obdurate heart! It is extremely humbling, that we ſhould *all* poſſeſs by nature ſuch an infinitely criminal diſpoſition towards the bleſſed God. But we muſt know, and diſcover the plague of our own hearts, in order to apply the remedy. For, *they that are whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick.*]

I received a line the other day from a perſon in the town of Union, which, if you think proper, it might be inſerted in the Magazine, ſomething in the following manner.

TO ONE OF OUR MISSIONARIES.

Dear Sir—Having juſt returned from conference, I ſet down to write you ſome good news. There ſeems to be an uncommon attention to religion here, eſpecially among the young people. Some we hope have paſſed from death unto life, though not viſibly to themſelves. We have had a full conference to-day from almoſt all parts of the town. I think that Chriſt's promiſe, to be where two or three are gathered together in his name, was in ſome meaſure made good to us. For your encouragement in your laborious work, I would obſerve, that moſt, if not all that are awakened around us, aſcribe it to the bleſſing of God upon your

labour

labour of love among us. But ſtop; give God the glory! Mr. —— ſaid, that he believed, that both he and his family, would have reaſon to bleſs God forever, for ſending you to this place. He frankly confeſſed, that you, as a ſon of thunder, rouſed him from his drowſineſs. His ſecond daughter, Mrs. ——, Mr. —— and wife, J. M. Mr. —— and wife, and Mrs. ——, are all under conviction. Mrs. —— exhibits ſome evidence, and Mr. —— is much more engaged. We want you here; at leaſt let us have your prayers.

Diſtrict of Maine, February 29, 1804.

For the MASSACHUSETTS MISSIONARY MAGAZINE.

A REMARKABLE INSTANCE OF DIVINE POWER AND GRACE IN THE CONVERSION OF A YOUNG LADY.

SHE was of a reputable family, and was favoured with a good education; in her perſon comely, and in her manners engaging. Her abilities were ſuch as excited the eſteem of her acquaintance, and her natural diſpoſition was unuſually kind and amiable; ſo that ſhe endeared herſelf to all who knew her. She ſenſibly felt another's wo, and was happy in adminiſtering relief, when it was in her power. She, however, lived a ſtranger to God and experimental religion, till ſhe was viſited with a hectic, which, after a while, terminated her life.

A little before ſhe left the world, God was pleaſed to open her eyes to ſee that ſhe was ſinful and loſt, being under a juſt condemnation for ſin. Being called to viſit her on the day ſhe died, on entering the room, I aſked her if ſhe had any thing in particular to ſay: ſhe ſaid "Yes; my *mind* is greatly diſtreſſed." She was told there was conſolation in Chriſt, and an all-ſufficiency for the greateſt ſinner that believes; ſaid ſhe was ſenſible of it, but was afraid ſhe had no intereſt in that glorious Saviour. She remained in this diſtreſſed ſtate, till about ten o'clock; then looking round on the family, and ſeeing them much affected, ſhe aſked them why they were thus affected? Said ſhe, "Do you think I am going into eternity? O do ſend for Mr. —— to pray with me." Till he came her diſtreſs increaſed. She would often break out in theſe words: "O Lord Jeſus Chriſt, have mercy on me."

She was aſked many queſtions relative to the ſtate of her mind by the miniſter. He then aſked her what he ſhould pray for? She told him, "that ſhe might be intereſted in Chriſt." After he had prayed with her, and converſed a little more, ſhe appeared

appeared to be almoſt ſpent, and ſaid ſhe would try to go to ſleep and ſee if it would not compoſe her a little. I then left her till about three o'clock, when viſiting her again I found her more agitated than ever. After ſitting by her a while, I left the room, but ſoon returning, found her mind greatly altered, and her diſtreſs gone. She made this exclamation. "Sweet Jeſus! Sweet Jeſus! Now I am happy: now I am happy. Send for my friends, and let them rejoice with me." She had ſomething particular to ſay to each one. I was not then preſent, but being ſoon ſent for by her deſire; when I came ſhe ſaid to me, "O rejoice with me, for I feel beautifully. The burden is gone off, and now I am happy; Jeſus will accept me, and I ſhall be pardoned: Oh the infinite riches of free grace! Oh the joys of heaven, the glories of that delightful place! Not for ten thouſand thouſand worlds would I come back."

She was aſked what made heaven delightful. She anſwered, the preſence of God and Chriſt, ſaints and angels, and ſin forever baniſhed. She begged all preſent to live a life of religion, and to devote themſelves to the ſervice of God.

She obſerved, if her ſickneſs and death, did but work for the good of her friends, ſhe was willing to ſuffer all that ſhe did, and ten times more. "Oh," ſaid ſhe, "the beauties of religion! I never knew what happineſs was before; I knew nothing but the *name*, but now I hope I *feel* it." She appeared to have a great ſenſe of the grace of God, and of the evil of ſin. She continued in this frame, only now and then a cloud came over her mind, till ſhe expired.

A few moments before her exit ſhe looked upon me and ſaid, "O, I ſuffer a great deal, but not ſo much as I deſerve; and though I am ſo great a ſinner, my Jeſus will receive me." She then died without a ſigh, ſtruggle, or groan, about eight o'clock in the evening, in the 23d year of her age.

By the foregoing we are taught, that no natural endowments and acquirements, qualify perſons for the enjoyment of God and the employments of heaven. A perſon may be amiable in diſpoſition, agreeable to friends, and a uſeful member of ſociety, and at the ſame time a ſtranger to God, and to the power and pleaſure of religion. Without holineſs no man ſhall or can ſee the Lord. It is very neceſſary to ſalvation, that every one be convinced of ſin, of his ruined ſituation by nature, and renewed in the ſpirit of his mind by the ſpecial operation of the Holy Spirit.

This brings every one who is the ſubject of it to ſee that he is a *great ſinner*, however regular his external conduct may have been; that ſin is *exceeding ſinful*, in that it is againſt an infinitely holy God, his holy law, and the great intereſts of his kingdom. The effectual operations of the Spirit, brings every ſubject of theſe operations to admire the *free grace* of God in Jeſus Chriſt, and

and to depend upon him alone for ſalvation, and to take delight in God, and in his ſervice.

Alſo, we ſee that God may exerciſe his ſaving mercy juſt before the cloſe of human life, and when he does, we have reaſon to think that it is made manifeſt. It was manifeſted by the thief on the croſs by what he ſaid. And in the inſtance before us, ſhe declared what God had done for her ſoul.

God having mercy on ſome, at a late hour, does not make it certain that he will have mercy on others. It is preſumption for any one to continue in ſin, with a hope that God will have mercy on him on a ſick and dying bed. For we have reaſon to believe that ſuch inſtances are few. There are but few, who have lived a life of ſin, who give good evidence of ſuch a change on a dying bed.

What has been laid before us in this paper affords encouragement to all on a ſick bed to ſubmit themſelves to God, and to hope in his mercy. For all ſuch find deliverance and peace.

Let the young renounce the ſinful pleaſures of youth, and ſeek thoſe, which come from God alone. This is the one thing needful. This is the good part, which ſhall never be taken away. This makes us happy in life, and bleſſed in death. Bleſſed are the dead, who die in the Lord.

POETRY.

INFANT DEDICATION.

Pſalm 127 : 3. LITTLE babe, I now receive thee
From thy Maker's bounteous hand,
Prov. 20 : 7. With his precious grace I leave thee,
Mayeſt thou in his favour ſtand.

Gen. 33 : 13. Weak and helpleſs, young and tender,
1 Chron. 22 : 5. Thou'rt committed to my care ;
While my thanks to God I render,
Thou a parent's love ſhalt ſhare.

Pſalm 51 : 5. Born in ſin, in ſin conceived,
1 Peter 5 : 8. Satan would deſtroy thy ſoul :
But by this my fear's relieved,
Luke 11 : 22. Grace can ſatan's wiles controul.

Pſalm 110 : 3. God's free Spirit in a twinkling,
Can diſplay reſiſtleſs power,
Heb. 12 : 24. Can apply the blood of ſprinkling,
1 Pet. 1 : 2. And thy ruin'd ſtate reſtore.

Thee a gracious God has lent me,
For thy precious ſoul I feel ;
Luke 2 : 22. Back to God I now preſent thee,
Rom. 4 : 11. To receive a holy ſeal.

This ſhall ſeal the cov'nant to me
In which God has thus agreed,
Gen. 17 : 7, 10. " I will be a God both to thee,
" And a God unto thy ſeed."

Gen. 17 : 1. Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
18 : 19. If I truly faithful be,
22 : 17. Stand engag'd, through Jeſus' merit,
Iſai. 44 : 3. To beſtow free grace on thee.

Gen. 26 : 45. Bleſſed cov'nant, what extenſion!
Rom. 5 : 20. Grace abounding over ſin!
O the glorious condeſcenſion,
Mark 10 : 14. Thus to take our infants in!

Acts 16 : 15, 33. Still no cauſe we find to ſever
Parents from their children dear;
2 : 39. Both united ſtill together
Pſalm 37 : 26. In the gracious promiſe ſhare.

Gen. 17 : 11. Of God's cov'nant as the token,
Abr'am's ſons were circumcis'd;
7 v. If the cov'nant be not broken,
14 v. Infants now may be baptiz'd.

Rom. 11 : 16—25. 'Twas the olive once did nouriſh
Jews, rejected now for ſin;
On the ſame the Gentiles flouriſh
Now through faith ingrafted in.

Luke 18 : 15, 16. If believers for their offspring
Then had heav'nly bleſſings ſeal'd,
Thus believers are in nothing
From ſuch bleſſings *now* withheld.

Jews the olive's ſap and ſweetneſs
Rom. 11 : 17. Did enjoy for Jeſus' ſake,
Of its precious root and fatneſs
Holy Gentiles ſtill partake.

1 Cor. 7 : 14. Children ſtill are holy named
From the parent, who believes;
Surely then we muſt be blamed,
Matth. 19 : 14 If we ſlight, when Chriſt receives.

Gen. 17 : 14. with Acts 2 : 39 & Rom. 11 : 17. Hearing what the word has told me,
Precious babe, a call I find
In the arms of faith to hold thee
To receive the ſeal deſign'd.

Eph. 6 : 4. O for grace to make me careful
All my duty to diſcharge;
Pſal. 119 : 32. Humble I ſhall be, and prayerful,
If the Lord my heart enlarge.

Deu. 6 : 7. Daily I would be inſtilling
5 : 29. Heav'nly truths into thy mind;
Eccle. 11 : 6. If a gracious God be willing,
Theſe thy heart at length ſhall find.

Prov. 19 : 18. Sharp corrections, if required,
22 : 15. For thy failings thou muſt feel,
23 : 13, 14. To promote the end deſired,
29 : 17. And preſerve thy ſoul from hell.

Eph. 2 : 8, 9. Still with God's free grace I leave thee,
When my duty all is done,
His free grace alone muſt ſave thee,
For the ſake of Chriſt his Son.

Aug. 22, 1802. ZURICS.